

HAVING A COLONOSCOPY

Why It Is Done

Your doctor has recommended that you have a procedure called a “colonoscopy”. In a colonoscopy your doctor uses a long, flexible tube called a colonoscope to look at the inside of your colon. This is a direct look at the colon (large intestine), as opposed to X-ray studies which look at shadows.

Before the Colonoscopy

It is important that the colon be clean and empty for this procedure. You have an important role to play in this. Your doctor will give you specific instructions, which you should follow carefully. Instructions will typically include a PEG solution to clean out the colon as well as a clear liquid diet the entire day prior to the procedure. ***If you have difficulty in following the instructions, please call.*** If you are on any blood thinning medications such as **aspirin, Motrin, Coumadin, or other non-steroidals**, please stop taking these medications 7 days before the procedure.

During the Colonoscopy

During the procedure, you will be lying on your left side on an examination table. You will be given medication intravenously (IV) through the arm in order to help you relax. With this medication, you should not feel pain or have any memory of the procedure. A lubricant is then applied around the anus, a digital exam is then performed with the exam finger, then the colonoscope is passed into the rectum. It is necessary for the doctor to introduce some air into the colon to aid in the examination. This may cause you to feel bloated and full. If you have the urge to pass the air, you may do so unless your doctor requests otherwise. The large intestine is not straight, but rather has curves, and at times twists. Therefore, as the instrument is passed around these turns, it may cause a cramping or tugging sensation. This is usually relieved as the instrument is straightened. The exam typically takes between 15-20 minutes, but may take longer if polyps have to be removed, or biopsies obtained.

After the Exam

- After the examination is complete, you will be asked to rest for up about 30 minutes in a nearby recovery room. This is to allow the effects of the medication to wear off and allow you to pass the air introduced during the examination. **Due to the medication you are given, you should not drive for the remainder of the day. Therefore, it is important that you arrange for transportation home.** You can resume your regular diet immediately following the procedure.
- Patients may experience gas pain from the air introduced into the colon from during the procedure. Most of this discomfort will subside on resuming normal activities. Some

minor discomfort may remain for 24 to 36 hours following the procedure and should not be a cause for alarm.

IF LASTING PAIN OCCURS, CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR

If you have had either a polypectomy performed or multiple biopsies, you may notice some blood in your next bowel movement.

IF BLOOD PERSISTS AFTER THE FIRST OR SECOND BOWEL MOVEMENT, OR IF THE AMOUNT OF BLOOD YOU SEE IS WORRISOME, PLEASE CALL YOU DOCTOR

- You may not have a normal bowel movement until the third day after the procedure. This is a normal consequence of the bowel clean-out you underwent.

What May Be Found

Your doctor will explain to you what, if anything, was found during the colonoscopy. In some cases, polyps may be found. These are small growths inside the colon. Most are benign, however, some, if left untreated may become cancerous. Often polyps can be removed at the time of the colonoscopy. While this lengthens the time of the colonoscopy, it often prevents the need for surgical intervention.

RISK

As with any procedure, there are some risks with colonoscopy, but they are rare. Perforation (rupture of the colon), bleeding and a reaction to medications are the main risks. Although uncommon, they can be treated by your doctor.

REMEMBER

1. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact this office.
2. Please make sure to follow the bowel prep the day prior to the procedure in order to ensure best results.
3. Please make sure someone drives you from the endoscopy center or hospital following the procedure because of the sedation.